

March 11, 2010

WASHINGTON, DC -Today, U.S. Rep. Michael Arcuri (NY-24) and U.S. Rep. Bill Owens (NY-23) welcomed Sanford Blitz, who was confirmed last night, as the Co-Chair of The Northern Border Regional Commission which will function as an independent agency to address the shared economic needs and harness the unique assets of the counties along the nation's Northern border from Maine to New York. In January, Arcuri and Owens joined several colleagues in sending a letter to U.S. Senator Barbara Boxer (D-CA), who chairs the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works, to call for the expedited confirmation of Blitz.

"The Northern Border Regional Commission will spur economic development in the Northeast," **Arcuri said.**

"With this confirmation, we now have the leadership in place to take the reins and begin implementing the programs and ideas critical to the commission's success

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I am proud to continue to develop and grow this commission for the future of the Northern Border states and help local communities prosper."

"Mr. Blitz's confirmation as the head of this commission is an important step in assisting the drivers of our local economy to create and maintain quality jobs for years to come," **said Owens.**

"My main concerns in Congress are economic development and job growth, and now that we have a co-chair for our commission, we can finally move forward with these priorities."

The Northern Border Regional Commission's primary responsibility will be to assist in the creation and implementation of regional economic development plans that will reduce poverty, address changing land use, and improve the quality of life for residents. The Commission will use a "bottom-up" approach where local development districts, non-profit organizations, and others bring project ideas and priorities to the Commission from the local level. It will also make grants for projects that are consistent with those locally-developed economic development plans.

Currently, in the Northeast region 13.1 percent of the population lives in poverty. The median household income is \$6,500 below the national average and unemployment is significantly higher than the national average. The region also lost population between 1990 and 2000, while the overall population of the United States rose by 13.2 percent.

In October 2009, \$1.5 million was designated for the Northern Border Regional Commission in the final Fiscal Year 2010 Energy and Water Development Appropriations Bill, which provided increased collaboration between Northern Border states to promote economic development and improve the overall quality of life throughout the Northeast region. The Northern Border Regional Commission stretches from the North Country of New York State through Vermont and New Hampshire and up to Maine.

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